

Your GP experience - assessment, test & diagnosis

See your GP

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned in the symptoms video, or in our 'bladder cancer & its symptoms' guide, ensure you visit your GP straight away.

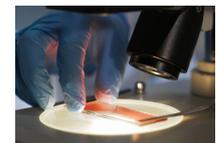
The GP visit

The GP visit will usually be structured as follows:

1. A detailed history-taking session where the GP will ask about your health history and current symptoms to determine if you have any risk factors for bladder cancer.
2. The GP may then examine you to assess if any cancer may be felt (this is very uncommon unless the cancer is very advanced). The GP may examine the lymph nodes, the lungs and liver to assess if the cancer may have spread. In men a prostate exam may take place.
3. The GP will also be assessing for other illnesses that may be causing your symptoms as any of the bladder cancer symptoms may also be caused by other diseases.
4. The GP may assess the urine by doing a dipstick exam.
5. If there are any abnormalities with the dipsticks test, a urine sample will be sent off to the laboratory for a formal evaluation of the urine under a microscope.
6. If a urinary tract infection (UTI) or infection of the bladder or kidneys is suspected, the GP may treat these conditions with antibiotics. If the haematuria does not go away the GP may consider a diagnosis of bladder cancer, perform further testing and possibly refer you to a urologist as soon as possible.
7. If there is any uncertainty in the diagnosis at this time, the GP may send you off for further tests (more details over page).
8. If bladder cancer is not diagnosed but the blood returns you should go back to the GP as perhaps you need more tests or a referral to a urologist.
9. If other causes for the blood in the urine are detected, some may be treated by the GP but others may require referral to a physician or nephrologist who specialise in certain diseases of the kidney or bleeding disorders or to the urologist (who are primarily surgeons) who treat cancers, stones, infections and large prostates in older men (benign prostatic hyperplasia).



To learn more about what to do when you have bladder cancer symptoms and need to take the next steps, click [here](#) to watch a video by Prof Simon Willcock.



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What are some of the tests a GP could send you for?

Blood Tests

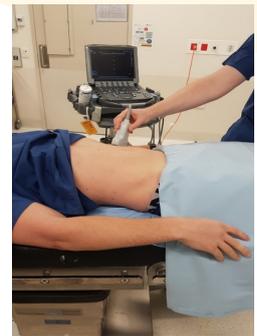
There is no blood test to check for bladder cancer. The blood tests will ensure you have not developed anaemia due to losing blood in the urine. Kidney function tests will determine if a big bladder tumour is blocking the drainage of urine from the kidneys. A liver function test will ensure there is no metastasis (spread of tumour) to the liver. Clotting function tests will ensure the bleeding is not as a result of a bleeding or clotting disorder or due to blood thinning drugs (anticoagulants) such as Warfarin.



Imaging Tests

These will assess the kidneys, ureters and bladder, but also other abdominal/pelvic organs such as liver, uterus, ovaries and prostate.

- An **ultrasound scan** creates a real-time picture of the inside of the body using sound waves. It's quick, affordable, non-invasive and not painful.
- A **CT/Cat scan** is when a patient lies on a bed that passes through a donut type structure that takes multiple xray images to create a 3D picture of the inside of the abdomen. Dye may be given to provide a contrast. It may take 10-20 minutes and is not painful.



If the test results show bladder cancer, your GP will contact the urologist and organise an appointment as soon as possible. The appointment should be within a month and it is important not to miss it.



What next's if you are diagnosed with bladder cancer?

If you have a potential diagnosis of bladder cancer, know that you are not alone.

The **BEAT website** provides information and support to help you through your journey.



For advice from other patients who have experienced bladder cancer, click [here](#) to go to our Patients' Stories page on the BEAT website.



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